

## PLEASANT PLAYS AT THE COMEDY

Helen Westley at Her Best in Delightful Comic Role.

ACTING STANDARDS ARE SET HIGH

Newcomers Do Well with the Washington Square Players.

By HEYWOOD BROWN.

Washington Square remains Washington Square, whether it is on Fifty-seventh Street, east of Third Avenue, or on Forty-first Street, between Broadway and Sixth. The Comedy is a bit bigger than the Bandbox; some of the old familiar faces are gone and it's a block and a half to a saloon now; but the new players and their plays are much the same. Possibly the acting is a little better, but we were never one to find fault with the skill of the performers out on the edge of the town.

The Washington Square mind is open toward the drama, but it has well defined phobias in regard to life. It is much harder for a good husband to get into a Washington Square play than it is for a good wife to get into a Washington Square play. At any rate, it would make a close contest.

If it wasn't for marriage the Comedy would be a lot more interesting. Just the same, the playrights of the Comedy aren't in the least grateful. They're battered at the ancient institution so long and so vigorously now that there can hardly be a doubt that with one more satire, a bit of grim, pessimism and perhaps a symbolic pantomime the workers of Washington

Square will send the ring and all the rest of the fripperies toppling over. Possibly, then, there is in the present bill at the Comedy a bit too much of the eternal optimism, but for all the loves and lovers there is a humor in the onslaught of the players which is sure to please even the folk whom they attack. It is true also that the institution of marriage is never attacked twice on the same ground, and the bill backs nothing in variety.

Best of the plays, because it is far the funniest, is Philip Moeller's "Sisters of Susanna." The chief virtue of this farce lies in the extraordinary opportunities which it gives to Helen Westley. It is the best work Miss Westley has done, and we think the characterization about as funny as anything we have seen this season. The humor is not novel. You may go from vaudeville to burlesque to pictures without escaping the caricature of the old maid who seeks the superman or less. It is one of the most ancient jokes of literature, and Moeller has very properly disarmed criticism by placing his character in an ancient city.

Miss Westley revels in a fearsome make-up, and she carries a lute or something upon which she strums discordant music as she bursts now and again into lyrical rhapsodies in the manner of David on his off days. The play concerns nothing more profound than the theory that a man may readily fall in love with his wife provided he does not recognize her.

Lee Simonson has fashioned a striking set for "Sisters of Susanna," and the costumes designed by Robert Locker are effective. It is difficult to tell just why the play is so funny, and it is therefore necessary to be dogmatic about it. There is no denying the laughter which the play compels. This bit of dramatic fare, by the way, is supposed to be the most shocking thing on the present bill, but as we went through it without a blush probably it has been slandered or overpraised, as you will.

Alice Brown gives the bill a New England touch with "The Sugar House," which shows how the wife of a woodsman wins her husband back from a light woman, and at the same time she learns from the worth of the folk round about. The play is devised in a somewhat heavy hammer and tongs style, but it has certain moments of effective drama. It is less distinguished for acting excellence than any of the other plays in the programme.

In fact, the best acting is done in the worst play. Jose Ruben gives a delightfully easy and graceful performance as a potential great lover in "Lovers' Luck," which was translated from the French of Georges de Porto-Riche by Ralph Roeder and Beatrice de Holthor.

## NEWS OF PLAYS AND PLAYERS

Maurice and Miss Walton Added to the Cast at the Century.

The possibility of internal complications in the case of "The Century Girl" was still further increased yesterday, when Maurice and Florence

Walton were added to the already long and dazzling cast recruited by Messrs. Dillingham and Ziegfeld. Announcement is made that Mr. and Mrs. Maurice have not danced hereabouts for two seasons, except in vaudeville and the films and the Hotel Biltmore and one or two other places.

The number of stars in the forthcoming Century show is now about thirty. If you ask the management, and about one or two if you ask any of the stars.

"The Intruder," at the Cohan and Harris, will close on October 21. The succeeding attraction is yet to be determined.

Baseball night will be celebrated at the Hippodrome this evening, and the elephants of "The Big Show" will show the Brooklyn team how to play.

"Come Out of the Kitchen" is the next attraction at the Cohan, and "Good Gracious, Annabelle," will succeed the Dollys at the Republic. Both pieces will open during the week of October 23.

Thomas H. Ince wishes to point out that the sinking of the *Stephano* by the U-53 was evidently inspired by "Civilization," as the same sort of thing happens in the film.

Oliver Morosco will make his debut as a London manager in January, producing "Upstairs and Down" in association with Alfred Butt.

Robert Edson is rehearsing in "His Brother's Keeper," said to be a drama of such temperature that Commissioner Adams will not allow it in a New York theatre. The play's immediate future was draped in mystery last evening, the management of the company insisting that it will open at the Broadway next Saturday and the management of the theatre declaring that it will not.

More than 300 actors are announced to have had tickers installed in their dressing rooms in order that they may observe the progress of this afternoon's game.

Crew of Antilla Arrives. Twenty-nine of the crew of the steamer Antilla, which was seriously damaged by fire 10 miles off Cape Henry, arrived yesterday on the *Morro Castle*, of the Ward Line. The *Morro Castle* was a day late, due to the decision of Captain William Gammon to stand by the Antilla until aid arrived.

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## FRIARS HOLD LADIES DAY JOKE IS ON LOUIS MANN

Somebody Tells Him a Fib About Brooklyn Team.

The Friars yesterday afternoon threw open the doors of their monastery, on West Forty-eighth Street, and called it a ladies' day, and the attractions offered were so great that they compared favorably with the lure of the world's series game.

Rudolph Ganz and By Myers were playing together at one time, and more people were on the second floor listening to the pianist than there were in the grill with the automatic scoreboard.

The performers, in addition to Mr. Ganz, were Albert Spalding, the Trio de Lutece and Andre Benoit. The happiness of the day was beclouded by only one tragedy. Louis Mann, who was betting on Brooklyn, was scheduled to make the speech of welcome in the concert hall, and he was unlucky enough to be required to step to the platform just at the moment when Brooklyn had men on second and third with only one out, in the eighth inning.

In the middle of Mr. Mann's speech somebody whispered to him that Smith had doubled, scoring both men, and the second half of the speech was therefore delivered under great excitement. As soon as he had reached his period Mr. Mann dashed down to the scoreboard only to find that he had been deceived.

Most of Broadway's actors and actresses were present, to the number of 800 or more.

## PASTORS PRAISE BILLY SUNDAY

Revival Committee Tells of Results in Other Cities.

As many as 150 ministers of different religious denominations in Manhattan and The Bronx gathered yesterday in the Marble Collegiate Church, Twenty-ninth Street and Fifth Avenue, at the call of the William A. Sunday Campaign Committee, to hear what the evangelist had accomplished in other cities.

The Rev. Dr. John H. Jowett, of the Fifth Avenue Presbyterian Church, described his enthusiasm for Billy Sunday after hearing him in Philadelphia. The Rev. Dr. Dager, of the Reformed Episcopal Church of Philadelphia, praised the revival there as a result of which his own church welcomed 575 converts, the largest number taken in by any one institution in that campaign.

The Rev. Dr. S. G. Snowden, of the Fifth Presbyterian Church of Trenton, described Billy Sunday's campaign in that city. They would be startled and shocked at first, he warned his hearers, by the evangelist's methods, but this day in the world would give place to added, to one of absorption in the man's vigor and sincerity and delight in his results.

Says God Chose Sunday. "You will all be taking your lunch in your pockets and spending the evening in the suburbs long before the campaign is finished," he told them. "You'll live there. I did. God has certainly chosen that man as an instrument for the spread of His Gospel."

The meeting, which was presided over by the Rev. Dr. Charles L. Goodell, of St. Paul's Methodist Church, was much gratified to hear from the Rev. Dr. Charles P. Finken, head of the Episcopal City Mission Society, that it might count on the cooperation of at least 10,000 of the city's Episcopalians in the campaign, led by the Rev. Drs. Peters, Reiland, Sedgwick and Shuman. And there are seven additional rectors who went on, "Hello, I feel sure, will be on the side of this campaign."

Old Man Hits the Trail. But the climax of the meeting came with the conversion of the first trail hiker. He was a spare old man, rather shabby though neatly dressed, who rose in a pew, and in a weak, quavering voice asked to be heard. "No man needs to come to Christ more than I," said he, "and I'm afraid I'm a little late. I have been a sinner, and now I seek the light, so I say, Pray for me, gentlemen, pray for me!"

"Amen," chorused the congregation of clergymen.

As the church emptied itself a group of the latter gathered about the old man and knelt with him in prayer.

Billy Sunday is to conduct his campaign in this city in April and May, of next year.

PALACE BILL EXCEPTIONAL

Jack Norworth and Emmett Corrigan Top an Excellent Programme.

After a month of varied fortunes, the Palace Theatre yesterday afternoon came into its own again, presenting a remarkable for the fact that it contained no weak spots. In the first place, there was Jack Norworth, who does not seem to have been harmed a bit by his two years in England. There was also Emmett Corrigan, giving a good performance in "The Van Lowe Diamond," an interesting little melodrama, by Oliver White. The piece gives a new twist to the presumably well known badge game.

Then there were the Avon Comedy Four, presenting a glittering new act at which one cannot but laugh. Natalie Alt, singing pleasantly; the Morgan Sisters, in their third Palace week, and the ever humorous Al Herman. Still others were George Austin Moore and Cordelia Haager, the Rials and the Alaska Trio.

THE MAN WHO CAME BACK

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## 'LE POILU' GIVEN AT THE GARRICK

Operetta, a Hit in Paris, Has Its First American Production.

MANAGERIAL MYSTERY PRESENT AT OPENING

New Piece for Most Part Is Witty Farce and Well Constructed.

There are managerial mysteries which are unolvable. One of these was present last night at the Garrick Theatre at the first American production of "Le Poilu," the operetta by MM. Jacquet, Hennequin and Veber, which was one of the recent hits in Paris.

"Le Poilu" is one of those essentially Gallie productions whose essential spirit never has and probably never will enter into the Anglo-Saxon consciousness. Faced with such a problem, the American manager usually considers the original French play as Broadway "adapters." This "adapter" produces something about as French as a Broadway cabaret, whereupon the public is delighted and believes itself quite in Paris.

The "adapter" was indeed present last night, but he arrived only about fifteen minutes before the final curtain, at a time altogether too late to save the operetta had it been a failure, but quite early enough to spoil it were it a success.

Up to 10:30 "Le Poilu," despite the addition of various numbers by S. Romberg, proved itself to be an exceedingly amusing farce, witty, well constructed and consistent to type.

Operetta About "Godmother."

It dealt with the vast institution of "godmothers," who in France adopt a soldier in the trenches, writing him and sending him food and tobacco.

This soldier comes home on leave, meets his "godmother" and marries her. She then follows him to the front, thereby breaking the army rules, where both her husband's color and the colonel's orderly fall in love with her. Of course, all ends happily.

The possibilities of this situation are evident, and Mr. Hennequin and Veber have made the most of them. Up to 10:30, with the exception of one song, the operetta was given in French, and the audience, the larger portion of which was of the same nationality as the singers, was unusually enthusiastic.

At the close of the first act, when Mme. Maubourg, draping the tri-color about her body, burst into the "Marseillaise," was really tremendous.

Audience Takes Up Song. The whole audience rose to its feet, taking up the song, and at the cheering for several minutes. During the evening each mention of the French soldier or his leaders was likewise enthusiastically applauded.

If Mr. George Sylvester Viereck was there he surely went away exclaiming: "There is a soldier and a soldier's change arrived. Bursting upon the scene came half a dozen American aviators, most of them of quite the usual musical comedy melody."

This doubtful band was led by Miss Belle Ashlyn, whose antics might very well have been placed in a Winter Garden revue, but which were equally certain out of place at the end of "Le Poilu."

Miss Ashlyn did get her laugh, especially by her imitation of the Crown Prince, but it was a laugh which might well have been spared. "Le Poilu" has a good book and pretty music, and has made the most of them. To our French speaking citizens, Raging it in English at the end can only injure it.

Excellent Cast. The cast was an excellent one, first honors going to Mme. Jeanne Maubourg, as Mme. Letellier; Pierre Minnaert, as the Colonel; Emile Detramont, as Justin; and Andre Bellon, as the Poilu. Mme. Maubourg is always a true artist, and she both sang and acted the part of the old grandmother with feeling, grace and authority.

Mr. Minnaert is a true artist, and he sang well, even if he scarcely looked the part.

There was in the first act another singer, a vision of beauty, possessed of a voice of true temperament. Why she did not appear again is unexplainable. Her name was given as Marguerite Deschamps, New York ought soon to hear from her.

This is the cast as given in the programme:

Madeline Letellier, Jeanne Maubourg, Pierre Minnaert, Emile Detramont, Andre Bellon, Justin, and the Poilu.

As high-handed a piece of overcharging as ever made a hotel ridiculous.

EARLY in May I decided to buy a trunk for my wife. "Neverbreak One Hundred" was the most prominent, so I decided to take one. When I priced the trunk at Wanamaker's the clerk said the price had been raised to \$20. I wanted a "Neverbreak," so I purchased it. On my bill of June 1 the trunk was charged to me at \$20. I was ill at the time, so I did not pay my bill until nearly July. Yesterday I received my June bill, on which was a credit of \$5 "allowance on my bill." I knew some time ago that the price had been lowered again, and felt I was one of those poor unfortunates known as "suckers." I lost faith in Wanamaker's and wondered how often they had "stuck" me before. Had I been in good health I should have made a strenuous "kick," but fortunately was prevented by illness. Now I am over, and I feel I did not carry out my duty. I feel like the man who then said to his wife, "I wish you would run away last week will come and get her bill for forgiveness."

If "Honest John" ever lived up to the name it is now. He has made me feel good all over, and I wish my account with him were larger. With a word of thanks for your straw hat exposure. G. K. G.

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## The Ad-Visor

Tuesday, October 10, 1916.

This department is engaged in separating the sheep of advertising, and of the service which backs up advertising, from the goats—and hanging a bell on the goats. It invites letters describing experiences—pleasant or unpleasant—with advertisers, whether they be manufacturers, wholesale houses, retail stores or public service corporations. It will print those letters which seem to show most typically how an advertiser's deeds square with the words of his advertising. Only signed letters, giving the writer's address, will be read. But the name will be printed or withheld, as preferred. Address: The Ad-Visor, The Tribune, New York.

Now THAT many of the magazines have cleaned up their advertising pages, would it be expecting too much to look for a little kaisomine on the editorial matter? Or aren't we that near the millennium? What a magazine sells its readers is the matter it contains. If that matter is unhealthy and tainted, isn't the magazine an unscrupulous merchant? Many of the fiction magazines have a double standard as bad as that of the various Hearst publications.

Here is an interesting bit of hypocrisy from Hearst's for September (I quote from "The Fall and Rise of Susan Lennox"):

"I've made up my mind to get up in the world—with my self-respect, if possible; if not, then without it. I'm going to have everything—money, comfort, luxury, pleasure. Everything."

"I admire the way you dress, but it makes me jealous. I want you to have nice clothes for the house. But I don't want your attractive people's eyes in the street. And I don't want you to look so alluring about the feet. That's your best trick—and your worst. Why are you smiling—in that fashion?"

"You talk to me as if I were your wife."

"He gazed at her with an expression that was as affectionate as it was generous—and it was most generous. 'Well, you may be some day—if you keep straight. And I think you will.' The artificial red of her lips gently helped to make her sweetly smiling face the perfection of gentle irony."

Many magazine editors seem to believe that nastiness is a synonym for human interest and "punch." Smutty stories are not the only means to a large circulation. They are merely the easiest way.

I suppose public opinion is about all that can be appealed to in this matter. It will tell in the long run. For example, you have probably noted the sheepish way in which Cosmopolitan and Hearst's Magazine readers apologize when caught in the act.

A person doesn't have to be much of a prude to feel as C. H. P. does about a great deal of the current magazine fiction. We heard the other day of one manufacturer who refused to allow his advertising to appear in one of the publications on account of a serial appearing in it. We know of several instances where these magazines have been asked not to send their complimentary copies to the homes of advertisers.

Public opinion will alter editorial policies, but advertising revenue will alter them quicker. An increasing number of advertisers are coming to the belief that readers attracted by prurient matter in a magazine have none of the confidence in it that is felt in their publication—to give an extreme instance—by the readers of "The Christian Herald." Smut happens to be the fashion—though there is evidence that it is a waning fashion—in magazine fiction. A few years ago it was the fashion in plays. Then a number of managers decided that cleanliness paid better. Perhaps the publishers will wake up.

CAN YOU think of a better guarantee? Neither can I. GEORGE R. PERRINE.